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FOR S AND S/SRAP HOLBROOKE
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SUBJECT: (S) COMCENTCOM PETRAEUS MEETING WITH UAE CHIEF OF STAFF

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRS DOUGLAS C.GREENE FOR REASONS 1.4
B AND D.

Iran

¶1. (S) CENTCOM Commander General Petraeus met with UAE Armed Forces Chief of Staff (CoS) LTG Hamad Mohammed Thani al-Rumaithy on July 24. Echoing his points on Iran with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed the night before (septel), Petraeus told the CoS by that the USG does not fully share the UAEG assessment of Tehran very quickly attaining a nuclear weapons capability within a matter of months. CENTCOM Commander added that the buildup of U.S. Patriot systems in the Gulf region has "changed the equation;" these, he continued, along with shared early warning, AEGIS systems in the Gulf, and numerous Gulf countries' Patriot capabilities, combine to send a strong message to Iran. In addition, Petraeus pointed out the capability that now exists for defensive counter-air, noting that the UAE's 72 Block 60 F-16s could take out Iran's entire air force.

¶3. (S) General Petraeus asked if the CoS had made a final site selection for the second US Patriot battery. The CoS replied that the proposed island site was probably the best location, but that his staff still needed to do some additional coordination work before the UAE made the final decision.

¶4. (C) Alluding to UAE fears of an Iranian attack, the CoS noted that, while past conflicts (in the region) have occurred far away from the UAE, the proximity of Iran and the presence of "most Western interests" in UAE is disconcerting. He pressed Petraeus for improved coordination (e.g., combined planning) and communications (e.g., intel. sharing) between U.S. and UAE forces.

Training Opportunities

¶5. (S) Based on comments made to Petraeus the previous night by MbZ (septel), the CoS asked about the benefits of UAE personnel observing a training rotation at the National Training Center in California. Petraeus reiterated his views on Arab cultural concerns and losing face in training scenarios and how those inhibitions have to be overcome in order to develop a culture based on critical self-examination and the After Action Review process used in US training. The CoS acknowledged the truth in this, adding that the problem exists to varying degrees among all GCC nations. "You've come to know us too well," he noted.

National Defense Planning

¶6. (C) The CoS stated that UAE was trying to coordinate with its friends in the GCC but added that he was not optimistic that this would yield any results. Because of that assessment, General

Petraeus advocated the development of US-UAE bi-lateral plans, and similar planning with other select partners in the region, and stated CENTCOM could be the "integrator" between each of these bi-lateral relationships. The CoS was lukewarm about the extent that this integration proposal could be fully implemented across the GCC; however, he stated that he would like to continue with initiatives for shared planning efforts and development of common planning tools.

Leading Edge

¶7. (C) Petraeus thanked the UAE for hosting the Leading Edge 2010 exercise. UAE Ambassador to the U.S. Yousef al-Otaiba asked Petraeus if CENTCOM could highlight to Congress the importance of the UAE's role in Exercise Leading Edge (in part to garner support for the 123 agreement). The CENTCOM staff is preparing a letter for Petraeus to send Ambassador Yousef thanking UAE for volunteering to host the exercise.

Military Cooperation

¶8. (C) In response to Petraeus's question on UAE endorsement of the Air and Missile Defense Center of Excellence concept, COS said the UAE would be ready to move forward. Following up on recent bilateral discussions, CENTCOM Commander reiterated USG policy on loaner NVGs (night vision goggles) and gave history on why the policy is tight. He explained that in U.S. forces NVGs are treated as if they were weapons. CoS said that he understands and agrees. (Note: UAE Air Force Commander MG Swaidan, this week, directed his team to coordinate with the 363TG to develop a plan to start flying with the NVGs. End Note.)

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